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EDUCATIONAL
PLAYS AND DRAMAS

# THE MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY

BY

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## NOTE

The dramatization of this story may be given by upper grammar grades. Without scenery, it can be used in regular school-room work, after the story has been read and discussed. Combined with patriotic music, it makes a good entertainment to be given before the parents and friends of the pupils.

The presentation of the play should give the pupils valuable lessons in patriotism and should also increase their historical knowledge. They should study the condition of our country at the time the story was written, the purpose of the author in writing it, and its effect. They should also discuss the period of time supposed to be covered by the story, and the changes that took place in our country and navy during that period. Special consideration should be given to the study of the navy; life on shipboard, appropriate costumes, insignia of rank, etc., ought to be discussed.

The costumes are not difficult to provide. Cadet suits may be used for the officers. Middy blouses and sailor caps are worn by the sailors.

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PREPARING TO SAIL

# THE MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY

## Scene I

*Court-martial at Fort Adams*

Characters
President of the Court
Members of the Court
Philip Nolan
Guard for the prisoner

(*A long table in the center of the stage; chairs arranged around the tables; flags, etc., draped at the back. The president sits in the center, with the members of the court on either side. Guards stand back of the table. Philip Nolan stands in front.*)

*President of the court* You, Philip Nolan, have been fed by the United States for all the years since you have been in the army. You have sworn on your faith as a Christian to be true to the United States. It is the United States which gave you the uniform you wear, and the sword by your side. Yet there seems to be sufficient evidence to prove that you are sick of the service, have been willing to be false to it, and would have obeyed any order to march anywhere with anyone had the order been signed, "By command of His Excellency, A. Burr." Do you wish to say anything to show that you have always been faithful to the United States?

*Nolan* Damn the United States! I wish I may never hear of the United States again!

(*Members of the court appear much shocked at the words.*)

*President* The court will adjourn to my private room to consider the sentence.

(*President and members of the court leave the stage; they return in a few moments and seat themselves at the table again. Philip Nolan walks around carelessly while they are absent.*)

*President* Prisoner, hear the sentence of the Court! The Court decides, subject to the approval of the President, that you never hear the name of the United States again.

(*Nolan laughs at first, but becomes sober when he sees how serious every one else looks.*)

*President* Mr. Marshal (*one of the guards in back comes around to Nolan and puts his hand on his shoulder*) take the prisoner to Orleans in an armed boat, and deliver him to the naval commander there. Mr. Marshal, see that no one mentions the United States to the prisoner. Request Lieutenant Mitchell at Orleans to order that no one shall mention the United States to the prisoner while he is on board ship. You will receive your written orders this evening. The court is adjourned without day.



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## Scene II

*The prisoner, Philip Nolan, delivered to the captain who is to have charge of him for first cruise*

Characters
Prisoner, Philip Nolan
Lieutenant Neale, Officer in charge of prisoner
Captain of ship
Officers and Sailors

(*The sailors appear to be cleaning the ship and preparing to sail. Officers are directing them. The captain is showing one of the sailors about hoisting the flag. Lieutenant Neale comes on board with the prisoner, Philip Nolan. The captain and Lieutenant Neale salute. The lieutenant hands a paper of instructions to the captain, who takes it and reads.*)

*Captain (reading)*

Washington, *November 25, 1807*

*Sir:* — You will receive from Lieutenant Neale the person of Philip Nolan, late a lieutenant in the United Sates Army.

This person, on his trial by court-martial, expressed, with an oath, the wish that he might "never hear of the United States again."

The court sentenced him to have his wish fulfilled.

For the present, the execution of the order of the court is intrusted by the President to the Naval Department of the Government.

You will take the prisoner on board your ship, and keep him there with such precaution as shall prevent his escape.

The gentlemen on board will make arrangements agreeable to themselves regarding his society. He is to be exposed to no indignity of any kind, nor is he ever unnecessarily to be reminded that he is a prisoner.

But under no circiumstance is he ever to hear of his country, or to see any information regarding it; and you will especially caution all the officers under your command to take care that this rule shall not be broken.

It is the intention of the Government that he shall never again see the country which he has disowned. Before the end of your cruise you will receive orders which will give effect to this intention.

Respectfully yours,
W. SOUTHARD, for the
*Secretary of the Navy*

## SCENE III

*On shipboard, first cruise*

CHARACTERS
Officers
Philip Nolan

(*Officers seated on deck, newspapers and books near them.*)

*First Officer* Here is something cut out right in the middle of an interesting article in this paper!

*Second Officer* Yes, you ought to have got hold of it before the captain cut it up for The Man without a Country; you know he cuts out everything that has the least reference to the United States in it before he lets him read any papers or books.

*First Officer* Who do you mean by "The Man without a Country"?

*Second Officer* Why, Mr. Nolan, of course. You have heard about him, but I forgot that you have just joined the service and haven't heard all the rules the captain observes in regard to him. We call Nolan "The Man without a Country," or some of the men call him "Plain-Buttons," because, though he wears a regulation army uniform, he is not allowed to wear the army-button on account of its bearing either the initials or the insignia of the country he has disowned.

*Third Officer* It is the turn of our mess to have him at dinner to-morrow; and when he is present we are not allowed to talk of home or anything which has to do with the United States. The captain always asks him to dinner on Monday.

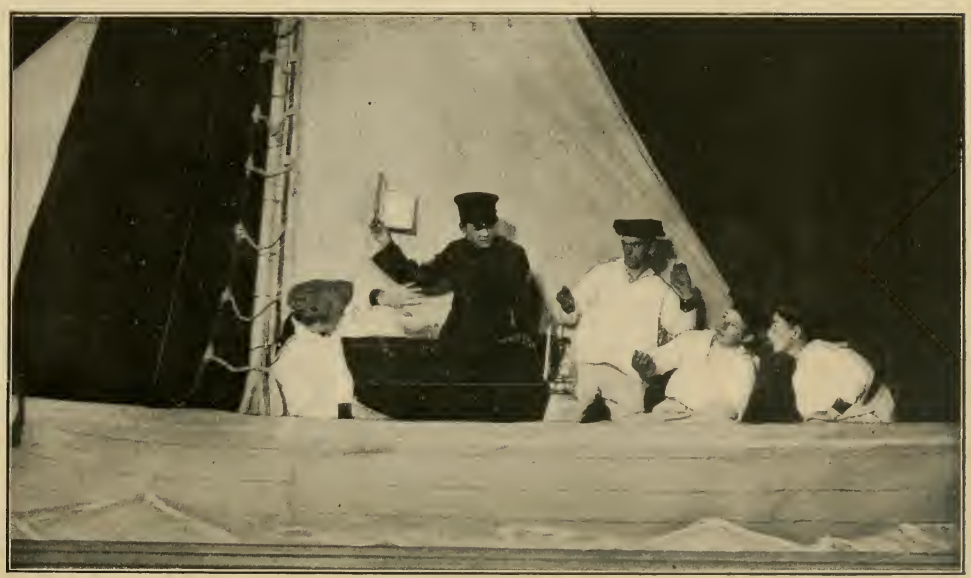
*Second Officer* (*picks up a book*) Is Nolan going to be allowed to join us this afternoon, when we read from this new English book that I borrowed from an officer when we touched at the Cape a few days ago?

*Fourth Officer* Yes, none of us have read the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," but we know it's about chivalry and things long, long ago. The captain says that there can't be anything national in it. Ah! here comes Nolan now. He tries to make believe that he is enjoying the voyage and that his imprisonment is a mere farce.

(*Nolan comes up and joins the group.*)

*Second Officer* This is a new book, Mr. Nolan. None of us have read it before, but we are enjoying the reading very much. Won't you go on with the reading?

(*Nolan sits down, takes the book, and reads a few lines, then comes to the following*)



THROWING THE "LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL" INTO THE SEA

*Nolan (reading)*

"Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
'This is my own, my native land!'"

(*Officers look uneasily at each other, Nolan hesitates, but goes on with the reading.*)

"Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he hath turned
From wandering on a foreign strand? —
If such there breathe, go, mark him well" —

(*Officers move uneasily. Nolan colors, and reads on brokenly*)

"For him no minstrel raptures swell;
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim,
Despite these titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentred all in self" —

(*Nolan chokes, starts up, flings the book from him, and rushes from the deck.*)

## Scene IV

*Ball on board an American ship lying in the Bay of Naples*

(This scene may be omitted, but if very little scenery is used so that there is room on the stage for the dances and if old-fashioned costumes can be obtained for the girls, it would make a pretty scene and give variety to the entertainment.)

CHARACTERS

Officers or Sailors
Philip Nolan
Some English and American Women staying at Naples at the time, and invited to the ball
Negro Band

(*Captain and some of the officers come on deck and salute.*)

*Captain* Remember that you are responsible in regard to Mr. Nolan. You are to take turns in standing near him to see that he does not talk with anyone who will tell him anything of home.

*Officers* (*saluting*) We will be responsible, sir.

(*Enter Nolan with another officer. Ladies also enter and are greeted by the captain and officers. American dances — "Virginia Reel," "Money Musk," and "The Old Thirteen." Officers in turn stand at one side and talk with Nolan. Finally between dances an American woman comes near them.*)

*Nolan* (*bowing to the woman*) I hope you have not forgotten me, Miss Rutledge. Shall I have the honor of dancing?

*Mrs. Graff* I am not Miss Rutledge any longer, Mr. Nolan; but I will dance all the same.

(*She nods to the officer in charge and they go off to dance.*)

(*A pause in the dance.*)

*Nolan* And what do you hear from home, Mrs. Graff?

*Mrs. Graff* (*looking straight at him*) Home! Mr. Nolan! I thought you were the man who never wanted to hear of home again!

(*She walks off and leaves Nolan alone.*)

## Scene V

*On shipboard, one of Nolan's later cruises*

Characters
Captain
Officers of ship
Philip Nolan
Negroes (captured from slave-ship)

(*Some officers and Nolan are on deck. Captain enters.*)

*Captain* We have brought on board the negroes from the slave-schooner we have just overhauled. Two of these negroes have worked for the Portuguese on the coast of Fernando Po. Do any of you speak Portuguese so that you can interpret?

*Nolan* I shall be glad to interpret.

(*Vaughan, an officer on the ship, and the negroes enter.*)

*Vaughan* For God's love, is there anybody who can make these wretches understand something? I talked Choctaw to all of them together, and I'll be hanged if they understood that as well as they understood the English.

*Nolan* I can speak Portuguese.

(*Vaughan brings two of the negroes up closer to Nolan.*)

NEGROES PLEADING TO BE TAKEN HOME

*Vaughan* Tell them they are free.

(*Nolan explains to negroes; they dance and leap, and kiss Nolan's hands and feet. The two negroes in front explain to the others, who also show their joy.*)

*Vaughan* Tell them that I will take them all to Cape Palmas.

(*Nolan tells the negroes.*)

*Negroes* Ah, non Palmas! Non Palmas!

(*The two negroes in front tell Nolan other things; then they speak to the other negroes and afterward to Nolan again.*)

*Vaughan* What do they say?

*Nolan* (*hushes the negroes, wipes his forehead, and speaks with great difficulty and emotion.*) He says (*taking hold of one of negroes*) "Non Palmas." He says, "Take us home, take us to our own country, take us to our own house, take us to our own pickaninnies and our own women." He says he has an old father and mother who will die if they do not see him. And this one (*pointing to another*) says he left his people all sick, and paddled down to Fernando to beg the white doctor to come and help them, and that these devils caught him in the bay just in sight of home, and that he has never seen anybody from home since then. And this one says (*choked out Nolan*) that he has not heard a word from his home in six months, while he has been locked up in an infernal barracoon."

*Vaughan* (*as quick as he can speak the words*) Tell them "Yes, yes, yes! Tell them they shall go to the Mountains of the Moon, if they will. If I sail the schooner through the Great White Desert, they shall go home!"

(*Nolan tells them; they dance and kiss him again. Then Vaughan takes the negroes to the back of the stage, while Nolan and a young officer go to the front of the stage together.*)

*Nolan* Youngster, let that show you what it is to be without a family, without a home, and without a country. And if you are ever tempted to say a word or to do a thing that shall put a bar between you and your family, your home, and your country, pray God in His mercy to take you that instant home to His own heaven. Stick by your family, boy; forget that you have a self, while you do everything for them. Think of your home, boy; write and send and talk about it. Let it be nearer and nearer to your thoughts, the farther you have to travel from it; and rush back to it when you are free, as these poor black slaves are doing now. And for your country, boy, and for that flag (*pointing to the flag*), never dream a dream but of serving her as she bids you, though the service carry you through a thousand hells. No matter what happens to you, no matter who flatters you or who abuses you, never look at another flag, never let a night pass but you pray God to bless that flag. Remember, boy, that behind all these men you have to do with, behind officers and government, and people, even, there is the country Herself, your Country, and that you belong to Her as you belong to your own mother. Stand by Her, boy, as you would stand by your mother.

*Young officer* I will. I never thought of doing anything else.

*Nolan* (*turning away and speaking to himself*) O, if anybody had said so to me when I was your age!

## Scene VI

*On shipboard, Nolan's last cruise*

Characters
Captain of ship
Danforth
Doctor

(*Captain enters from one side of stage; Danforth from the other. They meet in the center and salute.*)

*Captain* Have you seen Mr. Nolan to-day, Danforth? He has failed greatly in strength during this voyage, and the doctor has been watching him very carefully.

*Danforth* Nolan has not left his stateroom to-day; but this morning for the first time he asked me to come and see him there. What a shrine he has made of his room! I could not help looking at the Stars and Stripes up above and around a picture of Washington; at the majestic eagle that he has painted; and the great map of the United States which he has drawn from memory. "O Danforth," he said, when I entered, "I cannot get home! Surely you will tell me something now! You must know there is not in this ship, there is not in America — God bless her! — a more loyal man than I. There cannot be a man who loves the old flag as I do or prays for it as I do." Captain, I swear to you that I felt like a monster that I had not told him everything be-

fore. I did my best and told him all I could think of that would show the greatness of our country; but it was a hard thing to condense the history of half a century into that talk with a sick man. I cannot tell you how he drank it in and enjoyed it! Finally he asked me to bring the "Book of Public Prayer," and together we read the prayer for our country and the President of the United States. "Danforth," he said, "I have repeated those prayers night and morning, it is now fifty-five years." Then he said he would go to sleep and I came away.

(*Doctor enters.*)

*Captain* Here comes the doctor. He will tell us how Mr. Nolan is now.

(*Doctor salutes the captain.*)

*Doctor* Mr. Nolan is dead, Captain. When I went in to see him just now, I found him very weak and he only lived a few minutes.

*Captain* He has found a home at last and a country.

*Doctor* (*to Danforth*) He told me, just before he died, to give you this. (*Hands him a Bible.*)

*Danforth* (*opens the Bible and takes out a slip of paper. Reads*) "Bury me in the sea; it has been my home and I love it. But will not some one set up a stone for my memory at Fort Adams or at Orleans, that my disgrace may not be more than I ought to bear? Say on it:

In Memory of Philip Nolan

"*Lieutenant in the Army of the United States*

"He loved his country as no other man has loved her
but no man deserved less at her hands"

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